GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEFENCE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:729
ANSWERED ON:18.07.2002
JOINT INDO-US MILITARY EXERCISE
BASUDEB ACHARIA;GUNIPATI RAMAIAH;RENUKA CHOWDHURY;SHRINIWAS DADASAHEB PATIL;SUNIL KHAN

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and US held high level discussions to expand cooperation in military affairs;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Joint Indo-US Military exercises have taken place on Indian Soil and sea;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the same US military forces with whom the Pakistan army have conducted/is conducting joint operation in their so-called fight against terrorism;

(f) whether the Government are aware about the fact that the US military Commitment to Pakistan remains both at the strategic and practical levels more important to the USA than its support to India;

(g) if so, whether India`s increasing military and Defence Co-operation with the USA and the conducting of joint military exercises would only compromise our sovereignty to defend ourselves and counter such activities on cross-border terrorism; and

(h) if so, the reasons for conducting military exercises with USA?

Answer

MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES)

(a) & (b): Yes, Sir. During May, 2002 Indo-US Defence Policy Group (DPG) Meeting was held in USA to discuss ways o strengthening Indo-US Defence Cooperation.Both sides discussed a wide range of issues affecting the bilateral defence relationship. They agreed to further strengthen cooperation in the various defence related areas.

(c) & (d): An Indo-US Joint military exercise took place in Agra in May, 2002.This was aimed at achieving mutual understanding and cooperation between the two forces.

(e) No, Sir. India is conducting joint exercise along with US Pacific Command while the operations in Pakistan & Afghanistan are being conducted by forces belonging to US Central Command.

(f) Government is aware of the nature of U.S.-Pakistan military cooperation in the context of the U.S. military operations in Afghanistan. Indo - U.S. cooperation, including in defence and security matters, is based on the shared recognition that this relationship is important for building stability and security in Asia and beyond. India`s defence cooperation with the United States is based on mutual interests and not in the context of any other country.

(g) & (h): Closer defence and military cooperation with the United States is aimed at enhancing mutual capabilities in a number of areas of common interest, including combating terrorism. Government`s defence policies are guided solely by national security considerations and do not in any way compromise nation`s sovereignty.